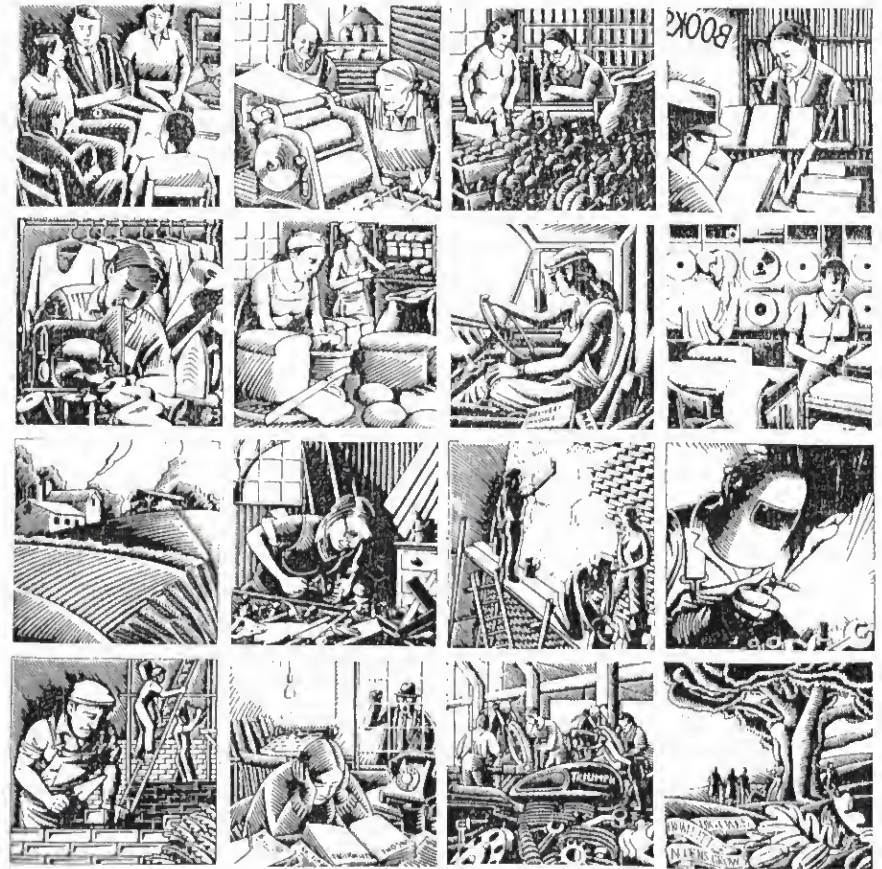


\$1.50

Anarchist Society

& Its Practical Realization



Graphic by Clifford Harper

by

Graham Purchase

See Sharp Press ★ San Francisco ★ 1990

The Guillotine at Work, by G.P. Maximoff. Another massive, well documented account of Communist butchery, focusing on the years Lenin was in power.

Anarchism, The State & Social Evolution

Mutual Aid, by Peter Kropotkin. One of Kropotkin's most famous books outlining the role of the social instincts from the beginning of time to the present day.

The State: Its Historic Role, by Peter Kropotkin. Probably Kropotkin's liveliest and most readable work.

The Encroachment, by Leo Baxendale. A modern, well-written account of the historical role of the state in England from the 15th to the 19th century.

God and the State, by Michael Bakunin. Sophisticated hellfire and brimstone from the father of modern anarchism.

Anarchism & The Technological and Ecological Revolutions

Architect or Bee, by Mike Cooley. A non-anarchist but impassioned appeal for the workers to regain control of the technological revolution.

Woman on the Edge of Time, by Marge Piercy. Utopian science fiction novel describing a communal society making use of technological developments in an ecologically integrated way.

Post-Scarcity Anarchism, by Murray Bookchin. Contains two pieces discussing ecology and technological innovation in relation to anarchism and revolution — *Ecology & Revolutionary Thought* and *Towards a Liberatory Technology*. Also contains Bookchin's classic, exhorting essay, *Listen Marxist!*

Towards an Ecological Society, by Murray Bookchin. A collection of articles on ecology, technology and urban development.

Anarchism and the Free City Commune

The Limits of the City, by Murray Bookchin. A modern libertarian/anarchist approach to the concept of the free, autonomous and directly democratic city.

Anarchism & Trade Unionism

Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism. The best relatively modern (written in the 1930s) introduction to the subject.

The Anarchist Collectives, Sam Dolgoff, editor. A short account of the accomplishments of the Spanish anarcho-syndicalists during the Spanish Revolution of 1936.

Anarchism & Revolution

Act for Yourselves, by Peter Kropotkin. A collection of essays.

The Conquest of Bread, by Peter Kropotkin. Two accounts of an anarchist revolution in England & France respectively.

The Free, by M. Gilliland. Literary account of a failed anarchist revolution in the U.K.

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Foreword

One of the most consistently levelled and damaging criticisms of anarchists is that they lack a positive vision of the future. Unfortunately, many anarchists have done nothing to counter this criticism and have actually made the situation worse by their insistence that anarchism is an anti-organizational and/or anti-programmatic ideology. This is far from the truth as a brief look at the writings of the most outstanding anarchist theorists—Rocker, Kropotkin, Malatesta, Berkman, etc.—will show. But it is a damaging and enduring myth.

A contributing factor to the endurance of this myth is the fact that anarchists have produced remarkably few works over the last half-century outlining positive visions of an anarchist society. For that reason I'm very happy to publish this much-needed pamphlet. I believe that it's an important step forward in convincing our fellow citizens that anarchism is a practical and desirable alternative to the authoritarianism which permeates so many aspects of daily life.

It should be emphasized, however, that in this pamphlet Graham Purchase is outlining one *possible* way in which society might be organized along anarchist lines. He is *not* arguing that his vision should be imposed; he is offering his vision in the hope that it will serve as a road map for the *voluntary* reorganization of society—or, at the least, will stimulate others to reconsider their own desires about the type of society in which they want to live and to work toward the realization of their desires.

—Chaz Bufe

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place our faith instead in Anarchy—and the ability of ordinary people to follow their own social evolutionary course and construct a world capable of ensuring our species' continued survival.

The future of our planet is in our hands. We the people have the power to avert the social-ecological disaster that threatens us. To rely upon government—or god—is foolish and irresponsible. *There is no personal savior, no god, no man on a white horse. Let us save ourselves!*

Suggested Further Reading

General Introductions to Anarchism

ABC of Anarchism, by Alexander Berkman. A simple, down-to-earth but also inspiring introduction.

Anarchy in Action, by Colin Ward. A small and very readable book which underlines the practicality of anarchist ideas by showing how they already operate in many areas of daily life.

Libertarian Communism, by Isaac Puente. A classic pamphlet by an anarchist doctor who was murdered by fascists during the early days of the Spanish Civil War.

Anarchism and Anarchist Communism, by Peter Kropotkin. Two clear, concise introductions in one small booklet.

Anarchy, by Errico Malatesta. Another classic introduction.

The Heretic's Handbook of Quotations, Chaz Bufe, editor. Lively and readable book of quotations dealing with most areas of political concern from an anti-statist standpoint.

The Dispossessed, by Ursula LeGuin. A science fiction novel concerning two planets—one anarchist, one authoritarian.

The Failure of Marxist-Communism

The Bolsheviks and Workers Control, by Maurice Brinton. A meticulously documented account of the destruction of workplace democracy by the Bolsheviks commencing from the day they took power.

The Unknown Revolution, by Voline. A remarkable first-hand account of the Bolshevik betrayal of the Russian Revolution.

Hungary 1956, by Andy Anderson. An account of the brutal suppression of the 1956 uprising by the Soviet military.

The Russian Tragedy, by Alexander Berkman. Berkman's account of what he found in the Soviet Union after his illegal deportation during the post-WWI red scare.

My Disillusionment in Russia, by Emma Goldman. Goldman's counterpart to Berkman's book.

The Time of Stalin, by Anton Antonov-Ovseyenko. A massive, but vivid, account of the crimes of Stalin by a former gulag inmate whose father was a political member who was murdered during the purges of the late 1930s.

attempts to create "workers' states" have always resulted in the development of vicious, totalitarian, bureaucratic, elitist police states. Revolution and government are incompatible — opposite and inimical to one another. The idea of a "revolutionary government" that will consolidate and further the revolutionary process is nonsensical. Revolution and government contradict and destroy one another. The reconstruction of government during the revolutionary process represents reaction and the end of revolution. We must break the cycle of governmental "revolutions" and embark upon the course of social revolutionary anarchism — the social construction of a rationally conceived, self-organized society in the absence of the nation-state.

Revolution is a complex social phenomenon that is born of the people and which is a natural part of biological and social evolution. Although centuries of oppression, injustice and stupidity have slowly prepared the ground for revolution, revolution represents an accelerated social evolutionary process and involves the rapid modification of outdated social, political, economic and ecological structures. Such transformations can never be the work of a single brain or of a scheme imposed from above through government. Revolutionary transformation involves the *whole* of society — not just a change of personnel in the controlling apparatus in the capital city — a revolution must occur in every hamlet, village, town and province, however distant or remote. Revolution is the result of billions upon billions of revolutionary actions by millions upon millions of separate people, all of whom are striving, however vaguely, toward a new social order.

Revolution involves local action, the people in every street, park, suburb, farm, factory and workshop, planting trees in their gardens and fields or devising new, non-polluting and ecologically integrated ways of producing humanity's many needs and requirements. The bio-social reintegration of humankind with nature and the development of genuinely democratic forms of political organization can only occur at the local level — at the level of each city and ecological region. Revolution, if it is to be successful, implies that millions of people take direct revolutionary action in their immediate locale, where only they can affect real and lasting political, economic and ecological change. The immense social-ecological reconstruction of our planet can never be the result of dictatorship, bureaucratic reformism or parliamentary politicking. It will be the social-r/evolutionary product of humanity.

The nation-state is a cumbersome and unwanted leftover from an imperialist and profoundly anti-ecological era, capable only of supporting its own bureaucracies, multi-national capitalist exploitation, and the privileges of the rich and powerful. Let us destroy the revolting monuments of the state-governmental period and through our unions, communities and federations build a better, safer, greener and more socially equitable world. Let us no longer place our faith in politicians who are only interested in dull reformism and self-aggrandizement and

I. The Historical Failure of the Marxist-Communist State

The recent political changes in Eastern Europe have shown us that the marxist experiment with centrally imposed, authoritarian state socialism has been a tragic failure in both economic and human terms. Even persons who are hardened and relatively indifferent to the general welfare have been disgusted by the corruption, bankruptcy and sheer moral rottenness of the dictatorial state-communist system (as in Romania).

That the era of Marxist-Communism has ended is beyond dispute. The people of Eastern Germany literally voted with their feet. Lured by the promise of jobs, department stores, Akai TVs and Mercedes cars they crossed the border to the west at a phenomenal rate. Separated by a wall of ignorance for so many years, the peoples of the eastern bloc are naively convinced that the limited freedoms offered by western-style liberal democracy will somehow solve the many problems they face. Nothing could be further from the truth! As we approach a new Millennium we are surrounded by a multitude of seemingly incurable social and environmental problems — global in nature — which capitalism and the "two party" system are unable to solve. Beyond this, the so-called liberal democratic state, newly equipped with terrifyingly efficient methods of centralized social and information management, can be but a fragile guarantee of freedom and continued progress for the broad masses of the people.

Despite the internal disintegration of international communism, coupled with the emergence of a "grass roots" and overtly radical ecology movement (which owes little or nothing to marxist ideology), a significant sector of the organized left appears unable to reject a narrow and outdated marxist dogma. The Marxist-Communist states have produced environmental destruction at least equal to that of the western capitalist states and have certainly failed to guarantee human liberty and individual self-determination. If we are to convince the people of the desirability of non-exploitative and non-capitalist social relationships, in order to secure human freedom and environmental survival, we must develop a language and a program that draws upon socialist traditions other than that of Marxist-Communism. Social anarchism is prominent amongst these alternative traditions of revolutionary social organization and reconstruction.

Anarchism as an organized political force holds as its ideal the attainment of a rationally conceived, ecologically harmonious, non-exploitative and non-capitalist social system. Anarchism, however, unlike other more or less progressive political, social and economic philosophies, regards the state in all its form as an inherently corrupt, hierarchical, authoritarian and unworkably bureaucratic mode of social control that is incompatible, indeed inimical, to the practical realization

of a sane, just and ecologically integrated society. Social anarchism, unlike Marxist-Communism does not seek to *impose* socialist conceptions upon the people from above by means of centralized state structures. It hopes, rather, that the people, in an attempt to produce a self-managed, directly democratic and ecologically sustainable social system, will organize themselves from the bottom upwards—at the level of individual communities, interest groups and workers' organizations.

Whether or not you agree with anarchists in believing that genuine social change in the direction of a socialist-ecological society can only come about with the destruction of centralized bureaucratic mismanagement, it is abundantly evident that the marxist attempt to impose socialism from above has been a tragic failure. The Marxist-Communist concept of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" or "workers state" has always resulted in the absolute dictatorship of the Communist Party—that is, dictatorship pure and simple! *This is a proven historical fact.*

II. The Place of the Government & the Nation State in Social Evolution

According to archeological and anthropological evidence, humans have never lived as isolated, solitary beings. There were of course always outcasts and hermits who preferred or were forced to live alone; such people, however, have been the exception rather than the rule (like the rogue elephant or the lone dolphin). Humans, like so many animals (from ants to elephants to monkeys), have evolved into socially complex and intensely sexual beings. Partly from the needs of survival and partly from the need to feel the touch of other kindred living beings, the human species has socially co-evolved in the most intimate fashion. Empirical evidence from the study of monkeys and other primates assures us that our species was social before it was human. Government as such is a quite recent social invention. History shows us that humans have lived for tens if not hundreds of thousands of years without feeling the least need for government. The nation-state in its present form is thus an astoundingly recent social-evolutionary event. Any [Australian] aboriginal will tell you this is so.

As the creationist mythology has been superseded by the theory of evolution, we have become aware that we are the product of a bio-evolutionary process in which nothing is permanent and in which everything is in a state of flux. As with biological evolution, the development of society (social evolution) has been a process of continuous adaption, *r/evolution* and modification. The Stone-Age, The Bronze-Age, The Industrial Revolution, The Great French Revolution, The Technological Revolution and The Reproductive Revolution are all stages in a dynamic and ever-changing social-evolutionary process. As conscious beings we can choose our collective social-evolutionary destiny. As a species we collectively engineered our

order to prevent the formation of permanent bureaucracies and undemocratic procedures within these potentially all-powerful economic organizations, anarchism stresses the need to rotate administrative positions, with office holders returning directly to the workforce after a predetermined period of time.

The workers, kept until now in servitude to capital and the state, are, in reality, the producers of *all* social wealth. All things *essential* to our species' day-to-day existence and continued survival—food, energy, transport, water, sanitation, etc.—are the products of human labor and natural resources which are (or should be) the heritage of all humankind. Once freed from working for the benefit of the few rather than the many, the workers would quickly *realize their true worth to society*, which is cleverly hidden from them through wage slavery, economic mumbo jumbo, and political violence and trickery. The workers would soon acquire a new sense of independence, pride and self-worth, and through their unions would organize to serve humanity.

The fact that trade unions are universal in character and not linked to a particular city or commune makes them ideal vehicles for a host of economically vital inter-communal activities. Anarchists believe that workers through their unions will ensure the equitable distribution of essential information, goods and services, some of which may be unobtainable at the level of the individual commune or city (i.e. coal may be found in only a few locations but is required by people in all locations).

It is obvious that if anarchism is to have any chance of realizing its goal of a stateless social order, then ordinary working people must develop non-bureaucratic and directly democratic forms of agro-industrial organization, *in advance of the revolutionary moment*, capable of ensuring that vital services function efficiently in the absence of state-capitalist control. In order to bring about the successful realization of the social anarchist revolution, the trains, buses, mines and telephones, etc., must continue to operate from the moment the state-capitalist order begins to disintegrate. Without agro-industrial working class or trade union organization, revolutionary anarchism will remain an intellectual fantasy and a philosophical pipe-dream.

VII. Anarchism & Revolution

Government will always be in permanent opposition to social evolutionary processes. In times of *r/evolution* government will always attempt to stem the tide of social progress and will never keep abreast with the demands of the masses. For government to do so would be contrary to its static, bureaucratic nature. Revolutions always commence with the overthrow of the government of the day!

Having destroyed government in the revolutionary act, why then constitute another as the marxists suggest? History has shown that

The forthcoming social anarchist revolution will be a communalist one—not a mere coup d'état or the transfer of power to a new Caesar, general or handful of parliamentarians. The revolution will be decentralized and have thousands upon thousands of centers. The citizens of every city, town and suburb, motivated by the need to provide an integrated and healthy social environment, will themselves set about the task of reconstructing a pleasant, safe and ecologically sustainable civic community out of the ruins of the past state-capitalist era.

VI. Anarchism, Social Revolution & Trade Unionism

Social anarchism, in both theory and practice, has always acknowledged the necessity of working class or trade union organization. When however, the social anarchist talks about workers' organization s/he does not speak in favor of the large-scale, centralized and bureaucratic trade union structures of the present day. Such organizations are for the most part puppy dogs in the lap of government—"negotiating" in the most servile fashion with our state-capitalist oppressors for our right to remain wage slaves and to earn a couple more lousy bucks a day. A centralized and alienated trade union organization whose entrenched bureaucratic leadership no longer participates in the day-to-day work of the factory, farm or workshop, can never represent working people or even begin to realize the immense social potential of grass-roots working class organization.

Obviously this kind of so-called trade-unionism can have no place in the anarchist social order of the future. For the workers in every individual farm, factory, workshop or depot will have to take charge of production for themselves. Engineers, researchers, machine operators, apprentices, etc., will have to cooperate amongst themselves, not for the benefit of a handful of capitalists or state officials, but for the direct benefit of themselves, their families, their industry, their city and humanity at large. Realizing that a particular plant or workshop cannot organize an entire industry, the workers in each farm or factory will federate with others in their trade in order to administer and regulate their collective affairs. The trade union would as a matter of logic cease being a bureaucratic and centralized body of a *few representatives* meekly bargaining in the state-capitalist-employer/employee dictatorship, becoming rather, an organization composed of *all the members* of a particular trade who are *collectively and publicly entrusted* with the proper functioning and development of *their industry*.

Individual trade unions would *directly* represent their workers when discussing the economic issues of the day with unions in other industries. They would be responsible to the general public—constantly informing the people of working conditions, trends, important research developments, environmental safety and other matters of general interest. In

social and political institutions, so it stands to reason that representative government and the nation state represent only one of many possible modes of social organization.

We as a species constructed the institutions of government and state, and likewise we can dismantle them. We can replace them with better forms of social organization, forms that do not rely upon constituted authority and large and inefficient centralized bureaucracies. Evolution is an ever-open book, and the nation-state, which has been with us but a few thousand years, is but a small paragraph in a long and ever-changing story.

The future of our planet and our continued evolution are under grave threat. Important social r/evolutionary choices must be made. The nation-state has not been particularly successful in solving the enormous social and environmental problems we as a species collectively face. Governments have not solved the problems of violence and war. Indeed until quite recently the Russian and American governments were threatening to blow one another up with nuclear missiles and probably destroy the entire eco-system of the planet in the process. (Destruction of the earth is the least desirable evolutionary development imaginable). Governments have consistently failed to preserve the integrity of our soils and forests. The imperialist empires of the last few centuries, for example—the most extensive form of state/government exploitation/domination yet known to our species—inflicted irreparable environmental damage not merely upon particular ecological regions, but upon entire continents. The introduction of new animals ill-suited to the prevailing ecology and the exploitation of local bio-resources—fertile lands, forests, game, etc.—to provide raw materials for the short term benefit of distant imperial-states has resulted in huge tracts of land being turned into pitiful deserts.

The human species, if it is to survive, must stop blindly placing its faith in government and state. Change and the continued evolution of our species can no longer be left in the hands of official bumbledom. Only the people at the level of the individual household, community or factory can initiate the socialist-ecologist r/evolution of the future. The state has always been a mechanism which supports the rich and powerful, who, far from being interested in the future of our species and our planet, are interested only in their own self-aggrandizement.

A social and political organization lasts as long as the people are willing to abide it. Within reason, any social system, no matter how vicious, destructive or stupid (apartheid or Nazism for example), is workable in the short term if enough people believe in it. But if enough people are convinced of the desirability of organizing society on a non-governmental basis, then anarchism, as an organized social force, becomes a realizable social-evolutionary choice every bit as practical as the centralized government and the nation-state.

III. Anarchism, the State & the "Technological" Revolution

Most people are indoctrinated from the cradle to the grave to regard government as the source of all social order. Despite the many hours on television and the many pages in our newspapers devoted to political issues, the media has never deemed it interesting or relevant to ask the question: *Is Government Necessary?* Despite all the corruption, silly arguments, unnecessary secrecy, bureaucratic ineptness and sheer dishonesty which has always accompanied parliamentary politicking, the media continually glorifies the state—producing an endless stream of overtly statist propaganda thinly veiled in a nauseating display of shallow patriotism. Media representatives constantly hound government leaders and officials, pouncing like dogs at the dinner table upon every dropped word and filing their news and opinion columns with the details of petty party intrigues.

People brought up from birth to regard government as a natural and essential part of the social order are not surprisingly a bit bewildered when confronted with the idea of running our social and political affairs without it. "Surely," they object, "the abolition of government would result in the destruction of organized social life and simply result in chaos!"

Non-governmental organization is, however, a normal part of everyday social life. Whether government exists or not, people cannot help but develop complex patterns of social organization. For every human need or interest, you can guarantee that some form of social organization will spontaneously emerge in order to cater for it—usually with no connection to government structures. Baby-sitting networks, industrial trade unions, horticultural associations, hobby groups, sports clubs, the Australian Country Fire Service, the Surf Life Savers Club, philosophical societies, the Red Cross, Amnesty International and Greynpace are just a few examples of the millions of voluntary social organizations, formed and developed independently of government in order to answer the needs and interests of our species. Many of these spontaneously evolved social organizations remain local or last but a few months to meet the needs of the moment. Others assume a more permanent character and branch out across cities, rivers, oceans, and other frontiers and develop an international character. There is an enormous pool of potentially non-governmental forms of association and organization corresponding to every human interest and need.

No single centralized national or international government (e.g. the European Economic Community) can ever hope to consider, let alone adequately deal with, the immense diversity of human needs and concerns. A group of a few hundred people passing laws and resolutions on pig farming one day, reproductive technology the next, and public

state-centralism would initiate a flourishing of civic awareness such as has not been seen since the decline of the ancient Greek or the early European medieval cities when each city considered itself a sovereign entity—independent, self-governing and answerable to no one. The citizens of the cities would no longer regard themselves as belonging to a particular state but to a particular city with its unique history, traditions, trades and architecture—a city situated, moreover, in a distinct ecological region which they must sustain and nourish in order to ensure their continued health and independence.

As the communal revolution progressed and the people of each city developed an ever-deepening sense of civic identity, the whole geography of the liberated city would begin to change. The city's districts and suburbs, instead of being powerless and centrally dominated chunks of an undifferentiated urban sprawl, as they are today, would become independent and vital urban communities. The city, in an effort to become self-sustaining and to prevent the degradation of the surrounding countryside, would dispense with outdated and extensive forms of agricultural monoculture and implement more local, organic and community based forms of agro-industrial production, with the members of each district themselves becoming responsible for the municipal and civic needs of its people—housing, health, the control of local conflicts, entertainment, primary education, child-care and a host of other cultural activities. Thus social anarchism hopes to replace the nation-state with a large number of agro-industrial city communes, an agglomeration of federated, yet independent, townships.

Despite the inevitable conflicts between opposing factions and districts, the necessity of sustaining a sense of civic unity and purpose would ensure that for the most part disputes would be peacefully resolved. A self-governing and sovereign city freed from external state interference, must, as a *matter of necessity*, resolve its problems. Everyone needs safe streets, shelter, food, entertainment and relative peace, so it is in the interests of every citizen to sustain an active, healthy and growing city—a city which provides healthy food and is sustainably integrated with its surrounding bio-regions (another word for ecological regions) and whose architecture, landscaping, parks, life and vitality provide sustenance, wonder and excitement.

This would not imply a return to the dark ages when each city was essentially isolated and surrounded by fortifications. For this dates from a time it took many days on foot or horseback to reach a foreign city. Fast and efficient information, transport and communication networks will never allow a return to that era. Of necessity, cities would federate with one another on the basis of culture, ecology, trade, industry and location in order to secure information, goods and services which are universally required or not readily available in the particular cities or communes.

characteristics. If this were to happen in every natural region around the planet, argues the anarchist-ecologist, then the planet as a whole would be much better protected against the destructiveness of our present social system.

The global federation of ecological regions is necessarily anarchistic. For it is impossible to rank one ecological region above another. All may have some unforeseen and significant role to play in ensuring the long-term ecological stability of our planet. How can it be that the surrounding environment of Australia's parliamentary capital, Canberra, is more important than that surrounding the uranium mine at Roxby Downs, South Australia? Government can have no part in the forthcoming social-ecological revolution.

V. Anarchism, Social Revolution & the Free-City-Commune

When anarchists speak of the destruction of the nation-state, people too often assume that this would mean a return to small-scale village or community life. Although anarchists would certainly like to see small villages and towns become independent, self-governing and autonomous, a return to a small scale and essentially isolated communal lifestyle on a mass scale is both repugnant and implausible. Anarchism is not a backward-looking pre-industrial ideology. Even though the development of fast and efficient transport and communication systems has eliminated the need to live in larger and larger cities, when anarchists speak of the destruction of the state they are not promoting hippy experimentalism or small, isolated communities.

There are assuredly empires within empires. And much as imperialism is the control of foreign lands by an alien and centralized entity, the nation-state itself is constituted as a mini-empire. Each national-state government is situated like a spider in its web, ruling the most distant cities and townships from Canberra, Paris or Berlin. Is this necessary or, indeed, a practical way to organize society? Social anarchists argue that the most natural and primary unit of social life ought to be the free, independent, self-governing city.

With the destruction of the nation-state during the social revolution, the people would themselves begin to administer the affairs of their cities. Just as people are coming to consider themselves inhabitants of distinct ecological regions, they would likewise come to consider themselves not as subjects of the nation-state but as equal citizens of a particular town or city. The people of each city, free of the torpor of centralized, bureaucratic mis-management, would assume a new sense of civic responsibility. Rather than wait for directives from the capital city or city hall, they would meet in the squares and boulevards to freely discuss the pressing problems of the day. The dismantling of

highways the day after, without any of the legislators ever having managed a pig farm, engaged in medical or reproductive research, or built a road, is, in our modern complex society, simply an absurdity.

Social anarchism does not imply the absence of organization. Anarchists simply want to remove centralized governmental organization and coercive authority. Although anarchists will not accept the *irrational authority* of a handful of politicians (whose only expertise is in the acquisition of prestige and power) anarchists do respect the *rational authority* of the expert. If one wishes to learn about, has a problem with, or is angry about some particular aspect of wine making, one approaches the workers of the wine making industries—and respects their expertise in matters of wine making.

Placed as we are at the advent of the "technological, computer & communications" revolution, we must forget childish conceptions of parliamentary government which belong to a past era. For we are entering the information age—an age in which billions upon billions of bits of data concerning all things imaginable whiz hourly around our globe. A technological-communications revolution in which there is the cooperative interchange of views, information, and expertise in all areas of human interest without the interference of government will bring changes that we are only beginning to fully appreciate.

Instead of placing our faith in burdensome, inefficient and overly centralized parliamentary bodies as we do at present, social anarchism foresees a society which is administered by a multitude of separate organizational bodies. Education groups for the furtherance of study; environmental groups for the preservation and management of natural wilderness; organizations for the protection of human liberties and for the promotion of peace and arbitration; industrial workers unions representing every conceivable trade and industry; statistical accountancy associations for the management and rational allocation of scarce resources—all of which will work together in their particular fields of activity, both locally and globally, for a better, healthier, greener and more rationally self-administered society.

New technology has however also placed enormous and terrifyingly powerful tools in the hands of the state. Already the government is insanely attempting to administer society through massive central computers (e.g., Tax, D.S.S., etc.). The state, in its desire to centrally and hierarchically administer an incredibly large number of people in an ever more complex society, has had to resort to ever more sophisticated computers which place enormous quantities of information and power in the hands of fewer and fewer people. Huge and powerful computer banks (with information on everyone and with little or no public access) are not only inefficient in that they will obviously fail to take account of the variety and complexity of human life, but dangerous also in that the potential for misuse of their information by tyrannical political elites on a vast scale is simply terrifying.

Anarchists abhor this development and argue for the computer-assisted management of things rather than people. Anarchists maintain that the technological, information and communications revolution must be used for the benefit of all humankind. They want a free and openly communicating society in which a multitude of specialist organizations will federate and cooperate with one another for the realization of a better, rationally self-administered society.

Big Brother or Social Anarchism! This is the choice which confronts us—we the people must decide the course of the social-technological revolution.

IV. Anarchism, the State and the Social-Ecological Revolution

Environmentalism is at present at the forefront of political and social debate. Previously committed nature-haters, such as Margaret Thatcher, have, in an effort to capture the green vote, recently taken up the issue of environmentalism. The politicians have begun to hug trees rather than babies at election time.

Government however will have no place in the forthcoming social-ecological revolution. Even now, under the threat of ecological disaster, it takes the bravado of a few committed environmentalists in non-governmental and non-party organizations such as Greenpeace to pressure the government to reluctantly enforce the few paltry regulations it has deemed to pass.

When the masses of ordinary people have perceived the necessity of changing the course of social evolution, governments of all descriptions have always proven inadequate. Even the most "progressive" of governments, because of their very structure, are capable only of dull, slow, and bureaucratically tortuous reformism. Placed as we are now at the brink of the social-ecological revolution it is obvious that the governmental system will never be able to keep abreast with the demands of the people. The wholesale "greening" of Australia cannot be accomplished by a few hundred politicians in a burial chamber under a pyramid in Canberra.

The people, perceiving that government is incapable of fostering the great environmental and social changes needed to ensure their continued survival, will begin to form their own groups and organizations. People in their neighborhoods and suburbs will themselves set up recycling depots and communal composting sites without waiting for government "approval." Workers, through their unions, will boycott the use or reckless disposal of dangerous substances and implement newer and safer techniques and procedures without waiting for the government to pass new laws on "industrial regulation" or for their employers to change their ways. At such times the people begin to organize

themselves without paying heed to what the government may or may not say. The fall of government and the nation state becomes inevitable.

When the Imperial English army invaded and colonized Australia it divided the country—more or less with a ruler and a pencil on a piece of paper—into six separate states. What impudence! What stupidity! To defy millions of years of evolution and draw a straight line through a desert or a forest and call this half Western Australia, this half the Northern Territory.

As the social-ecological revolution progresses, people will begin to organize themselves not according to electoral and state boundaries but rather according to natural, geographical or ecological ones. Electoral and state boundaries, having been artificially imposed upon naturally occurring boundaries, are completely useless in the forthcoming social-ecological revolution. The existence of a huge number of distinct and unique ecological regions and sub-regions with their own special mixtures of flora and fauna, is something that the national-state system, born of Caesarism and imperialist conquest, has largely failed to take into account. The people, anxious to protect the biological integrity of the region in which they live and bring up their families, rather than relying on the orders of some distant government, will themselves repair the damage caused by reckless capitalist exploitation and the appalling legacy of centuries of colonial-state-imperialism. The social-ecological revolution thus implies anarchy. For in the new age of ecological radicalism and biological realism the political boundaries of the past statist era will be replaced by natural, ecologically occurring ones.

This would not simply be a "re-tribalization" of humanity—for we can never return to a past age. Besides, the human species is at last beginning to think in global terms. Think Globally, Act Locally! is already the watchword of the 1990s. The need for clean air and the inter-continental migration of bird and marine life shows us that the distinct ecological regions are not closed entities. The well-being of all ecological regions, however unique or isolated (e.g. a South Pacific atoll), is intimately dependent upon the well-being of all the others. The people of each ecological region will quickly realize that not only must they strive to ensure their own happiness but must also strive to take a responsible place in a delicately complex inter-regional, continental or global federation of environmental forces.

The ecological-anarchist approach to the global environmental problems we face is to save the whole by saving the parts. Social anarchism encourages people to stop relying upon government to solve their problems and to realize that people have much more influence in their immediate neighborhoods. Ecological anarchism claims that the only rational approach to planetary bio-federation and environmental stability is to persuade people to deeply identify with the natural ecology of their local place—and protect that place whilst developing industrial and agricultural practices that are specially adapted to its ecological